

Settler Swahili

Settla (*Kisetla*), or **Settler Swahili**, is a Swahili pidgin mainly spoken in large European settlements in Kenya and Zambia. It was used mainly by native English speaking European colonists for communication with the native Swahili speakers.

Contents
Origins
Phonology
Vowels
Consonants
Morphology
Noun classes
Concordial agreement
Affixes
Lexicon
Usage in popular culture
References

Settler Swahili	
	Settla
	<i>Kisetla</i>
Region	Zambia, Kenya
Native speakers	<i>None</i>
Language family	Swahili pidgin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	sta
Glottolog	sett1235 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/sett1235) ^[1]
Guthrie code	G40C ^[2]

Origins

British colonization in the region—largely in what is now Kenya and Zambia—created a complex relationship between English and the native languages of the countries where Settla is spoken.

Phonology

Vowels

Settla appears to have a similar vowel system as compared to standard Swahili.^[3]

Consonants

Settla contains a different and more reduced set of consonants than standard Swahili.

		<u>Labial</u>	<u>Dental</u>	<u>Alveolar</u>	<u>Postalveolar / palatal</u>	<u>Velar</u>	<u>Glottal</u>
<u>Nasal</u>		<i>m</i> /m/		<i>n</i> /n/	<i>ny</i> /ɲ/	<i>ng</i> /ŋ/	
<u>Stop</u>	<u>Plosive</u>	<i>b</i> /b/		<i>d</i> /d/	<i>j</i> /j/	<i>g</i> /g/	
	<u>Tenuis</u>	<i>p</i> /p/		<i>t</i> /t/	<i>ch</i> /tʃ/	<i>k</i> /k/	
	<u>Aspirated</u>	(<i>p</i> /pʰ/)		(<i>t</i> /tʰ/)	(<i>ch</i> /tʃʰ/)	(<i>k</i> /kʰ/)	
<u>Fricative</u>	<u>Voiced</u>	<i>v</i> /v/	<i>dh</i> /ð/	<i>z</i> /z/			
	<u>Voiceless</u>	<i>f</i> /f/	<i>th</i> /θ/	<i>s</i> /s/	<i>sh</i> /ʃ/		<i>h</i> /h/
<u>Flap</u>				<i>r</i> /ɾ/			
<u>Approximant</u>				<i>l</i> /l/	<i>y</i> /j/	<i>w</i> /w/	

Notes:

- Voiceless stops *p*, *t*, and *k* are often more aspirated in Settla when compared to standard Swahili. This is particularly true when these stops are in word-initial position or require more articulation.
- For some /k/ in standard Swahili, Settla uses /g/. For example: *piga* 'hit' *pika* 'cook' in standard and *piga* 'hit', 'cook' in Settla.
- Settla lacks the implosive variants *b* /b/, *d* /d/, *j* /ɟ/, and *g* /ɡ/.
- /f/ and /v/ in Settla show a different allophonic distribution than in standard Swahili. For example, in standard Swahili *ndovu* 'elephant', *nguvu* 'strength', and *mbovu* 'rotten' contain /v/, whereas in Settla, both words for 'elephant' and 'strength' can freely use either [f] or [v]: *ndovu/ndofu*, *nguvu/ngufu*. However 'rotten' *mbovu* always contains [v] in Settla.
- Some dialects of Swahili feature *dh* /ð/, *th* /θ/, *gh* /ɣ/, and *kh* /x/, however these do not occur in Settla. *th* /θ/, *dh* /ð/ are usually merged into *s* and *z* respectively, while *gh* /ɣ/ is always merged into *g*. *kh* /x/ will always merge into either *k* or *h*, with there seeming to be a preference towards the corresponding English form. Since *gh* /ɣ/ and *kh* /x/ are changed, typical Arabic loanwords that feature those segments are practically never used in Settla.
- The nasal velar /ŋ/ does not occur by itself in Settla as it does in standard Swahili. /ŋ/ alternates between a stop [g], and a nasal [ŋ] plus stop [g].

Morphology

A thorough investigation into the morphology of Settla has not occurred, but there are some general patterns that hold true.

Noun classes

Settla features a noun class system that differs from standard Swahili, which like most Bantu languages contains a rich noun class system. Since most Settla speakers are native speakers of English, which lacks a complex noun class system, Settla appears to also have a less complex noun class system than standard Swahili. Although there needs to be more research on the specifics, it can be concluded that the speakers of Settla do not disregard this system, but their patterns do most certainly differ from standard Swahili.

In Settla:

- n- nouns are identical.
- m-/mi- and ji-/ma- classes only occur in the plural form.
- ki-/vi- and m-/wa- classes tend to occur in singular form.
- nouns that feature an initial nasal followed by a stop undergo epenthesis of a vowel.

Concordial agreement

Numeral adjectives and certain adverbial forms do not always show concordial agreement like in standard Swahili.

Affixes

Swahili is an agglutinative language, which gives rise to a complex structure for verbs in the form of affixes. Unlike standard Swahili, Settla verbs do not feature any negative, subject marking, relative pronoun marking, or object marking affixes. However, Settla can still convey these aspects by using other words and not verb-bound affixes.

For example, if one looks at personal pronoun subject marking in standard Swahili, one would find that these subject affixes are required for the verb. In Settla, in a form that perhaps mimics English, these affixes are absent and replaced by outside personal pronoun nouns, which only rarely occurs in standard Swahili. The personal pronouns of Settla are as follow:

	Singular				Plural		
Language	First Person	Second Person	Third Person		First Person	Second Person	Third Person
English	I	you	he, she	it, that	we	you (y'all)	they
Settla	mimi ~ mi	wewe ~ we	yeye ~ ye	ile	sisi	(ninyi)	(wao)

We can see in the examples below that in standard Swahili, the definite time marker attaches closer to the verb stem as opposed to the subject prefix, and that the 3pl marking affix is also present in the verb. In Settla, the 3pl affix is removed, forcing the definite time affix to attach to the verb directly, and the pronoun used is *yeye* (he / she), since *wao* (they) appears to be fairly absent in Settla:

- Standard Swahili:

wao wa- -na- kaa
They 3pl DEF. TIME sit

'They are sitting'

- Settla:

yeye na- kaa
They (He/She) DEF. TIME sit

'They are sitting'

As opposed to direct objects, indirect objects in standard Swahili are given precedence to be marked. This indirect object must also carry a dative case suffix. In Settla, the dative suffix is omitted, and the syntactic structure mimics English again, like in the example above.

Affixes marking an object that are featured in standard Swahili are also replaced by separate words in Settla.

Standard Swahili features many ways of negating verbs (including marking a verb with an affix), whereas Settla uses the word *hapana* (commonly meaning 'no' in standard Swahili) in a more free manner (generally mimicking English syntax) to negate the verb that follows. Note that in the last declarative example, the syntactic structure changes in Settla, mimicking English.

- Standard Swahili:

si -ta- anguka
NEG/I FUTURE fall

'I will not fall'

- Settla:

mimi hapana anguka
I NEG fall

'I will not fall'

- Standard Swahili:

ha '-ja- oa
NEG/He PERF marry

'He hasn't gotten married'

- Settla:

yeye hapana oa
He NEG marry

'He hasn't gotten married'

- Standard Swahili:

m '-si- -ni- -pig- -en- i
You Pl. NEG me hit pl. IMP

'Don't (you) hit me!'

- Settla:

hapana pigu mimi
NEG hit I

'Don't (you) hit me!'

As noted above, Settla generally lacks verb constructions that in standard Swahili require a complement affix. However the one large exception occurs where standard Swahili would use a subjunctive, the Settla form of the verb would take on the infinitive prefix *ku-* (to in English). One brief exception to this exception though, is that the preposition *kwa* is sometimes used to indicate purpose, and therefore appears to form a restriction between *kwa* and *ku-* co-occurring.

Many other affixes within a standard Swahili verb are replaced within Settla.

iko, a locative verb in standard Swahili is expanded in Settla to uses outside of the standard Swahili usage which indicate place in n-class or indefinite-class nouns. It is used more generally as a locative, ignoring other more specific affixes that would occur in standard. *Iko* may also be used in Settla as a copula alternating with *ni* or NULL.

- Standard Swahili:

ku-na / wa-ko watu wengi hapa
there-are people many here

'There are many people here.'

- Settla:

Iko mutu mingi hapa
LOC people many here

'There are many people here.'

- Standard Swahili:

(yeye) ni mgonjwa
he is ill

'He is ill.'

- Settla:

yeye iko mgonjwa
he LOC ill

'He is ill.'

- Settla:

yeye ni mgonjwa
he is ill

'He is ill.'

- Settla:

yeye mgonjwa
he ill

'He is ill.'

Tense in Settla is heavily reduced to only 3 forms (Standard has 11). *na-*, the standard present tense affix often can mean future tense as well. The tense of a phrase is generally determined contextually.

- Standard Swahili:

ni -ta- kuja kesho

I FUT come tomorrow

'I will come tomorrow.'

- Settla:

mimi ta- kuja kesho

I FUT come tomorrow

'I will come tomorrow.'

- Settla:

mimi na- kuja kesho

I PRESENT come tomorrow

'I will come tomorrow.'

Lexicon

Settla's lexicon is considered to be on a continuum between the two official languages of Kenya: standard Swahili and English. The lexicon is also heavily influenced by geographical, social, and emotional factors. Although geography factors into the lexicon, it is unknown if Settla has different geographical dialects.

It is not uncommon for parts of Settla speech to be in a bantuized version of English, and in fact sometimes whole sentences can come out in English. Due to the rise of English education in Kenya, it is possible for communication to feature more and more English words and phrases.

Usage in popular culture

Settla can be seen spoken in Ernest Hemingway's nonfiction work *Green Hills of Africa*.

References

1. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "KiSetla" (<http://glottol.org/resource/language/id/sett1235>). *Glottolog* 3.0. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
2. Jouni Filip Maho, 2009. New Updated Guthrie List Online (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180203191542/http://goto.glocalnet.net/mahopapers/nuglonline.pdf>)
3. Vitale, Anthony (1980). "Kisetla: Linguistic and Sociolinguistic Aspects of a Pidgin Swahili of Kenya". *Anthropological Linguistics*. **22** (2): 47–65. *JSTOR* 30027756 (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/30027756>).

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Settler_Swahili&oldid=909926016"

This page was last edited on 8 August 2019, at 14:37 (UTC).

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.